THE New Republic

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MARCH 23, 1959

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Washington Wire

Spring Champagne

WALKING across Jackson Park to the White House the other morning, we couldn't help thinking how lovely it looked. A fine time for Macmillan to leave foggy London we think. The grass turns green, pansy beds show a few flowers, housekeeping has begun already behind the necks of two of the French generals on the pedestal of the Lafayette monument. (Birds shun the quarter-ton cherubs on the other side, we notice—too cute, probably.) The air is voluptuous; pigeons strut, starlings chirp, buds sprout, squirrels chase the females all over the lot.

We were reminded that we had serious work to do by an empty flask under a park bench. Our modest project is to elevate Washington by substituting a champagne bottle now and then in a convenient spot. It is little niceties like this which mean so much! It does wonders for the elan of groundkeepers. Maybe it is only a futile gesture but we always hope that we have sent one wide-eyed tripper back home to Hamtramck from this city of romance with a dream of ambassadors exchanging state secrets across from the White House and taking sly snifters of Veuve Clicquot.

Taller in the Saddle

MOST Washington news analysis is a psychoanalysis of the President. Eisenhower has seemed firmer, more positive, more alert, more in control at recent press conferences. Opposition has been good for him personally, and it is a pity it didn't begin sooner if his health can stand it. He has been aroused by his fear of inflation and by the attack on his military perspicacity.

In the background it has to be acknowledged that there is some question about Eisenhower's adequacy in dealing with Khrushchev. His television broadcast this Monday was virtually forced by the confusion he left in his press conference last week. He said flatly that the United States cannot fight anything in Europe but a nuclear war. Well, then, why all the ground troops there? If Khrushchev was as bewildered as most reporters were, he was in a bad state. As Eric Sevareid said, "If the head of a state announces that he will not use the deterrent, then the deterrent ceases to exist." It was high time the President took the country into his confidence in a carefully thought out broadcast; it is hard to think how the times could grow much more grave.

As to inflation, the thing to remember is that there is none. There has been inflation in the past; there may be more in the future. But for 12 months prices have been about the same. Eisenhower has thrown such a scare into the country, however, that the stock market is boiling with investors hedging against inflation; and the Treasury can't sell its bonds for fear of inflation driving the price down.

The Real Inflation-breeders

THERE has been one sudden, big development on the economic front that deserves a word even if it is difficult to explain. For almost six years economists have been telling the protesting Federal Reserve Board that its tight money policy (high interest rates) wasn't enough to curb inflation, and that the difficulty lay, in large part, in "administered prices"—high prices maintained in the steel, automobile and other monopoly industries partly attributable to unions but more largely to managements who stand to gain whether there is a recession or not.

Now all of a sudden Federal Reserve Board aides, evidently speaking for the Board, acknowledge this to be true. They throw in the sponge. It is a great step forward, and it has been a long time coming. The tight money policy holds back *all* economic advance but doesn't control the specialized monopoly centers which are the real inflation-breeders. How control them? We are coming closer and closer to direct governmental price controls if administered prices keep advancing and the Administration is really serious about inflation.

There is a bizarre element in much of the American economy these days. Under the farm subsidy plan we now have an incredible $9 billion worth of unwanted crop surplus in storage at taxpayers' expense. . . . To maintain the pretense of his phony budget balance *next year* Eisenhower continues to predate billions of dollars worth of expenditures into *this year's* budget with the idea that the current deficit is so whopping that it doesn't matter any more anyway. . . . And on the oil front the Administration has just slapped compulsory quotas on cheap oil from abroad so as to keep up prices at home (which of course is inflationary); and by some really beautiful sophistry does this in the name of "conservation" though it means quicker exhaustion of America's limited oil supplies. Oh, well, it will keep up oil company profits, that's the main thing.

All Roads Lead to Washington

IN A WAVE of sentiment and almost without debate the United States has made one of the great and irrevocable decisions in history: to expand after the old Roman system with all Federal controls leading to Washington rather than after the flexible British system with London only one among equal Commonwealth capitals. We breached the non-contiguous area tradition with Alaskan statehood, and now breach the continental tradition by leaping 2,000 miles into the Pacific for Hawaii. For a while it looked as though we might develop a commonwealth and actually began it with Puerto Rico, but now Puerto Rico, too, may soon agitate to become a state. The stake, of course, is the two Senators. Small states naturally gang up with each other against the big states and by their disproportionate Senate power levy enormous toll. Note that the first vote of the two "liberal" Senators from Alaska was against a genuine curb of the filibuster.

Senate fairytale: Surely in the Hans Christian Anderson fable the little boy who cried out "The Emperor has no clothes!" was called Proxmire.

T.R.B.

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Southerners and Schools

Helen Fuller's seven articles have been reprinted for classroom and organization use

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
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Letter from Alabama

WHAT DOES this bitter struggle over school desegregation mean to Southerners who must accommodate the demands of the community to those of conscience? An answer comes in a letter sent to *The New Republic* in response to our series on "Southerners and Schools." Attached to it was a half-page advertisement from the February 1, 1959, *Montgomery Advertiser-Alabama Journal* headed: "This is the program which will KEEP THE SCHOOLS SEGREGATED." "We believe," the advertisement reads,

> that any person who speaks, writes, or in any way advocates or works for anything short of total and complete segregation will be ostracized. . . . We feel sure that an aroused and informed public will make it unprofitable and uncomfortable for any person to remain in our community if he is not willing to support the will of the community in this matter.

"I will explain how the ostracism works," the letter from Alabama begins, "by giving you a little summary of what has happened to our 'Fellowship of the Concerned'." It then continues:

LEADING CHURCH WOMEN of both races have started these "Fellowships" all over the South. The one here in Montgomery was formed by a leading Presbyterian Church worker who was in charge of "Negro work" for the state Synod. She has conducted Bible Institutes every June for Negro church women, and so this group grew naturally out of her interests. She is a beautiful, white-haired, pink-cheeked lady, one whom all the women in the group love very much. Her chief assistant has been a leading Methodist church woman whose husband and father were Methodist ministers and whose three sons are Methodist ministers, too. She came to disbelieve in segregation by following the teachings of the Methodist Church. The Episcopal Church has been represented by a number of women, all of them very much "in society" (one of whose daughters was the Queen of one of the big masked balls last year, and all Junior League girls). The Jewish women in the group also represent the leading families, and are also motivated by ethical sentiment. The Negro women are leaders among their people, church women, club women, teachers and nurses. One of the speakers at the meetings was the wife of the president of Tuskegee Institute.

THE INVITATIONS to the meeting that caused the trouble were sent by mail and only went to those people who had expressed some interest or were known to be interested. About 100 women came. All of them were known but one, who came from one of the leading Baptist churches here and said someone (unspecified) had given her an invitation. She sat all day taking notes, and while we knew she was there for no good purpose, the women said in their Christian charity that it might do her good and no one should be excluded. It turned out that she was a "spy" sent by the Baptist Laymen's League, an organization devoted to "rooting out hidden integrationists" in the churches. When we came out a group of men were riding

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around taking down our license numbers and making flashlight pictures of the women.

SOON AFTER, the anonymous telephone calls started—every five minutes, all night long. This went on for several weeks. There were some threats, vile and obscene insults (most of the women did not even know the words that were being used!), until the women had to take their telephones off the hooks; finally had them disconnected.

AT LAST the calls died down. But then a little weekly paper, the voice of the segregationists, published the names, license numbers, telephone numbers and the husbands' businesses of the women whose names they had obtained. After that, the calls started up again, worse than ever. Husbands were called and threatened and even one brother-in-law who runs a laundry was threatened by people coming in with laundry bundles which they said they were NOT leaving because he had such a nigger-loving sister-in-law.

SINCE THERE HAD BEEN some carelessness in taking down license numbers, a large number of the names published had had no connection with the meeting at all, and soon paid ads began appearing in the *Advertiser*, saying: "We are segregationists, we were not at the meeting, we have nothing to do with such things, etc." Then statements appeared in the little weekly, by one husband who said his wife had "resigned" from the group and would have nothing more to do with it and that he was a segregationist and so on, and almost begging for forgiveness for having a wife who had embarrassed him so.

THERE HAS BEEN rumor, gossip, talk and discussion of all this for months, but no one has said anything in defense of the group. People are so frightened that husbands won't defend their wives, churches won't defend their members (although the Ministerial Alliance did pass a resolution saying the anonymous telephone calls were bad), and close friends have dissociated themselves from friends. When it comes down to it, the Negro community is the only community that has the strength and courage to do anything about the situation. At least they have a solid community of 50,000 people, they have good leadership, they stand by each other, and they have a base to stand on and they know they will not be ostracized by their own people. So now our little group is ended. No one is willing to go on with it in the face of the adverse reaction on the part of the community.

Aid—The Battle Is On

ALTHOUGH the President's mutual security message to Congress runs nearly 7,000 words, the import of the message is summed up in 21 words. After setting forth the background and need for foreign economic aid—*i.e.*, the Development Loan Fund—he adds reassuringly of the $700 million Loan Fund request: "This sum will allow the Fund a level of activity no higher than it established in its first year of operation." Not surprisingly the President's satisfaction at what the Loan Fund will *not* be allowed to do has been interpreted as a rebuff to Under-Secretary of State C. Douglas Dillon, who wants the Fund to be given permanent status and not less than $1 billion annual lending capacity, as well as to eight members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (notably Chairman Fulbright) who called on the President last August 25 to reappraise the "serious disproportion" as between military and economic aid.

The appointment of the Draper Committee to review the aid program had been presented to the eight Senators as a response to their letter; the military weight (two Generals and an Admiral) on the Committee was explained as a way of window-dressing what would be recommendations for strengthening economic aid. Now that the Committee has leaked its interim recommendation for a $400 million increase in *military* aid, the Senators feel they have been led down the garden path. The President's light treatment of the DLF comes in the very week that a House Subcommittee had cut in half the White House "supplemental" request for $225 million to make up for last year's DLF cuts.

Mr. Eisenhower has now succeeded in alienating hard-core supporters of both economic and military aid. Even before his aid message he had outraged many of the more numerous military aid supporters with his "spenders" attack on the Democrats and his defense budget. Now the mood in Congress is such that one must expect political retaliation in the form of sweeping across-the-board cuts in all of the aid program. The question is now how the Development Loan Fund can be defended against the anti-aid assault ahead. And the answer appears to be that the best defense is a good offense.

In our view the pending legislation which Senator Kennedy and others in both houses are preparing—to give the Loan Fund five-year borrowing authority up to $1.5 billion per year—now becomes crucially important. The fact that it is also more of a political risk than ever does not alter the responsibility of the enlightened majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to act boldly and with unity. The Committee might well consider separating the Loan Fund item from the mutual security program, presenting economic aid as separate legislation. This would be a self-defeating course in the House: the meat ax would simply be directed at both of the resulting aid bills. But in the Senate a separate Loan Fund bill, staunchly supported by Committee Chairman Fulbright and thus, let us hope, tolerated by Majority Leader Johnson, might conceivably be enacted. Whatever tactics are adopted, the Senate must provide a powerful counter-blast to the widespread ignorance in the House so that the Loan Fund is not wholly emasculated.

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Voteless Washington

SINCE CONGRESS, in an exhilarating outpouring of generosity, has extended the blessings of liberty and representative government to Americans 5,200 miles from the nation's capital—in Barrow and Honolulu—it has become possible to imagine the Congress going further and granting a small slice of responsibility to disenfranchised citizens of Washington, D. C. An Administration-sponsored "home-rule" bill, introduced by 21 members of the House from both parties, would permit the now-voteless residents to elect a 15-man city council, whose decisions could, however, be vetoed by the President. The President would be empowered to appoint Washington's mayor. In addition, the District would have one non-voting Representative in the Congress.

The bill does not give Washingtonians all they deserve (they may not, for example, vote for a President), but at least it is not, as Gerald Johnson says, a poke in the eye with a stick.

Eighty-eight percent of the District's budget is raised by local taxation, yet those taxed have nothing to say about how their money is spent. They go hat in hand to the Congress for money for junior high school librarians (there are none, and not too many books either), and are turned away. They wish to do as other cities do and clean up spreading decay in the metropolitan area, but Congress has neither the time nor the inclination to act on such matters. (It does have time, however, to discuss in detail a leak three years ago in the city morgue.) The federal government as the largest property-owner in Washington pays to the District for upkeep and improvement little more than one-third the funds it would pay in taxes—were it taxed as are other property holders. Nor can the District ever be sure from year to year how much it will have to run its business. The President asks Congress for one amount, the District Committee recommends another, and that in turn is cut by the Appropriations Committee.

Strongest opposition to "home-rule" comes from Representatives of the Deep South and the Washington Board of Trade. Both are satisfied with the *status quo*. District businessmen have learned how to get what they want from the Congress, and Southerners fear that terrible day when a non-white might become a city official. (Washington is now 53 percent Negro.)

If the Administration proposal is to become law, it will probably require a discharge petition in the House. (The Senate has always been sympathetic.) This is because the District Committee in which the bill is buried is a dumping ground for such pinheads as Randall S. Harmon (D, Ind.) or such astute but vicious men as James C. Davis (D, Ga.). Those who live outside Washington can help by urging their Representatives to give the District a vote.

"There must be some way that's more scientific"

How Much Fall-Out?

SOVIET nuclear tests last fall have doubled the amount of radioactive debris in the earth's stratosphere, Dr. Willard Libby of the Atomic Energy Commission revealed last week, and scientific belief, he reports, is that because they were polar shots most of the "tremendous" amount of radioactive material thus released will fall on the northern hemisphere in 1959. "Care and caution" should be taken about increasing contamination, Dr. Libby warned, because of "uncertainty" over the biological effects of radiation. But he did not tell us how much of a hazard to human life this new fall-out would be—perhaps because neither he nor anyone else is sure.

In all the years of its stewardship the AEC has established no official machinery for setting or enforcing standards as to the total amount of radiation the human body can absorb without danger. Instead, it relies on the National Committee for Radiation Protection, an independent group of scientists in and outside the government, to recommend "maximum permissible concentrations" or MPC's for the various atomic end-products, and uses their MPC scale to weigh the "safety" level of radioactivity in milk, wheat and other foods. Casual critics have pointed out the "variability" of MPC levels. (The MPC for workers in atomic plants has been low-

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ered from 100 rems per year to 60, to 15, and finally to five.) But now the total system is in question. On March 10 the respected chairman of the Public Health Service Advisory Committee on Radiation, Dr. Russell Morgan of Johns Hopkins, told an Atomic Energy Subcommittee that the MPC basis of computing radioactivity is "based on something other than scientific fact. . . . Nowhere is there a concerted effort at providing sound scientific data specifically aimed at the radiation problem." It is "unfortunate," Dr. Morgan says, that from the days of the Manhattan Project we have chosen "to place both the developmental and safety aspects together in one organization." Perhaps the best way to solve this conflict of interests in the AEC is to transfer the policing power to the Public Health Service, where, by the nature of the problem, it belongs.

A Lurch in Iraq

BRIGADIER QASSEM is the idol of about half Iraq, but is also a cipher. What is in his mind as he waves from his office rooftop to delirious crowds of Baghdadis? Probably not self-satisfaction, for he waves almost diffidently. Perhaps he is remembering that, less than a year ago, the same fickle crowd was cheering for Arab unity, and against Nuri Pasha's pro-Western and anti-Nasser policy. Last week's revolt has pushed Qassem toward a twin pro-Eastern and anti-Nasser policy which could be just as repugnant to Iraqi neutralists and nationalists.

The rebellion against him last week broke out in Mosul, which is a classic trouble-spot, being on the racial dividing line where highland Kurd meets Arab lowlander. It is alive with endemic quarrels, and any disturbance there is always an opportunity to pay off old scores. Disregarding this risk, the government had permitted—indeed encouraged—a rally there of the Communist and fellow-travelling group known as the Partisans of Peace. But the tone of the rally was too much for the local military commander, who dispersed it by force. According to his left-wing adversaries he was egged on by next-door Syria, which has dropped all its criticism of Nasser's economics in its agitation about Qassem's politics. Maybe Syrians helped him, though the objectives that the local Commander proclaimed during the short life of his "free Mosul radio" seem almost too parochial for that interpretation. They were: (1) less despotic rule by Qassem; (2) no further utilization of state publicity organs to work up a Qassem-cult and (3) a reversal of the policy that had replaced the "genuine revolutionaries" of July 14 with "opportunist elements."

But he seems to have had only local support from the army, and none from the air force, which bombed his supporters. He is said to have been executed; and Baghdad's Communist press is in full cry not only after him but after the United Arab Republic. Moscow radio has joined the hunt, castigating not Nasser but imperialism; the Qassem government has sent most of the Egyptian embassy packing, and its recent attempt at rapprochement with Cairo is at an end. The leading rebels are dead; Moscow has had to listen to a fresh attack on Communism by Egypt; Qassem is less stable than he was since he is likely to have further alienated nationalists; he must be wondering how best to retain the services of the several prominent anti-Communists in his government, notably his socialist Finance Minister and his new Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister—both familiar international figures, the one as Iraqi representative at the UN and the other as Ambassador to Bonn. The spectacle of Nasser abusing Qassem and the burning of Nasser in effigy in Baghdad can give no satisfaction to the West, for it is well to remember that Iraq's oil exports to Europe must cross the United Arab Republic. The only gainers would seem to be Qassem's Communist and fellow-travelling henchmen, but even their gain may be temporary, for the experiences of the Syrian Communist Party suggest that Moscow would not hesitate to jettison them if political expediency were to point that way.

Health for Peace

THE American Medical Association's president, Dr. Gunnar Gundersen, has testified in favor of the "Health for Peace" bill written by Sen. Lister Hill and co-sponsored by 57 other Senators, and when the AMA endorses more federal funds for health, it is news. Hill's bill (which is almost certain to become law this year) would promote international cooperation in medical research through the agency of a new National Institute for International Medical Research within our renowned National Institutes of Health. The new institute would be given $50 million a year to support overseas medical research and an international exchange of scientists and scientific information. The Hill measure would provide a 1,400 percent increase in the current US investment of $3.6 million annually in international medical research.

Whether the investment will live up to its billing ("Health for Peace") is an open question. The Russians have ended their self-imposed isolation from the World Health Organization and are joining enthusiastically in its international public health programs. But they have also launched their own "health offensive" in underdeveloped countries, concentrating on spectacular projects —new hospitals and pharmaceutical factories—that yield immediate propaganda returns. It remains to be seen whether they will integrate their "health export business" with the kind of international medical cooperation envisaged by Senator Hill.

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The Macmillan Plan for "Limited Disengagement"

Bonn

IT WAS FAIRLY clear that Prime Minister Macmillan would have to bring some kind of concrete plan with him on March 12, when his two-day meeting with Chancellor Adenauer began. Contrary to rumors, the Federal Government's attitude on negotiations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union had remained absolutely rigid. Dr. Adenauer had not shifted an inch from the position which, since 1949, he only once considered forsaking—when the resumption of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Moscow in the fall of 1955 suggested to him that the Kremlin might be genuinely more interested in West German goodwill than in the consolidation of the East German Communist state.

Mr. Macmillan's plan is in essence a simple one, and the first point about it is that it should not be called a plan for "military disengagement" in Central Europe. Dr. Adenauer has been bludgeoning the exponents of disengagement with such severity that the very mention of the word would have converted the atmosphere of his conversations with Macmillan from one of rigidity to one of rigor mortis. Instead, the Macmillan Plan stresses the desirability of a "thinning-out of military forces" on either side of the Iron Curtain, without "discrimination" against either the NATO or the Warsaw Pact countries, and without "discrimination" as to the types of weapons employed by them. This formula is deliberately cautiously phrased, but it is backed by incisive thinking.

The Macmillan Plan, it is held, offers three potential benefits. It would, by securing limitation and control of armed forces in a part of Europe, open the way to more positive progress in the field of general, controlled disarmament. This, in turn, would react on Russian thinking with regard to the alleged "threat" of full-scale West German rearmament and could engender some measure of Russian confidence in the non-warlike aims of the Western powers. In the second place, the Macmillan Plan might induce parallel progress in the political field, for it is fair to assume that the strictly military and strictly political reasons for Soviet distrust are as closely interwoven as two skeins of wool in a Donegal tweed. It might even be possible to make progress toward military disengagement (for the word still remains valid, in spite of Dr. Adenauer's prejudices) conditional on parallel progress in the political field. Finally, a fair and genuine agreement on military forces would tend to produce that "relaxation of tension" desired by Adenauer's and Ulbricht's opponents in both Western and Eastern Germany.

Behind these arguments lies a deeper purpose. Deliberately, the Macmillan Plan does not attempt to specify totally demilitarized areas, for fear of foundering on Soviet as well as West German disapproval. But a thinning out of forces (or several successive thinnings-out) could be accompanied by the creation of a totally demilitarized zone. It may be a mistake that this would favor the Soviet side; the exact reverse may be true. Mutual withdrawals of Soviet and NATO troops by 100 kilometers from the interzonal frontier would produce the following results: British garrisons in the North German Plain would be pushed back closer to the Dutch frontier, and American forces in Southern Germany would fall back roughly to a line running from Darmstadt to Regensburg. But the Red Army would have to retire into an area comprising less than one-third of the East German Republic. The big Soviet troop concentrations athwart the Berlin-Hanover and Berlin-Eisenach *autobahns* would be dispersed. The whole concept of Soviet strategy (with conventional or conventional-plus-nuclear forces) would be disrupted.

The argument that the creation of a demilitarized zone of this kind would also create a "dangerous military vacuum" is not very convincing. Control of the interzonal frontier is a police matter; on the strategically important northern section of it, British troops are already aligned a long way to the west. The political argument that a zone of this kind will encourage the Soviet side to relapse with greater confidence into maintaining the *status quo* could be more valid.

What of the West German attitude toward the Macmillan Plan? Little will be said officially for the time being, for Dr. Adenauer is an immensely difficult person to shift from any viewpoint he has once adopted. Yet his press chief, Herr von Eckardt, has said that his government is not opposed to progress toward the control and limitation of armaments, if parallel progress is made in the political field. And three days before the Macmillan visit to Bonn, Federal Foreign Minister Herr von Brentano said that his government had never opposed the 1955 Eden Plan for limited disengagement. Although this is not true, it at least indicates a change of emphasis.

IF NOTHING ELSE, the Macmillan visit to Bonn has shown the immense difficulties of securing agreement to any new line of policy which could break the East-West deadlock. The West Germans would have taken a plan of this kind better from Dulles than from Macmillan. But had Mr. Dulles thought of any plan? The impression left by his hasty dash to Berlin last month was that he was desperately anxious to pick Dr. Adenauer's brain for new ideas. But there were none. It seems fair on the whole to assume that it was this somewhat farcical episode, rather than ambition to win the next British General Election, which led to Macmillan's taking the initiative, and reconnoitering the defenses in depth of his adversary in the Kremlin and the diplomatic fox-hole of his awkward ally in Bonn.

TERENCE PRITTIE

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The Superficial Aspect

Idiocy as a Catalyst

IF THE NEW state of Hawaii within a few years is represented in Washington by a pair of Senators, one rejoicing in the name of Ah Sin, the other in that of Hashimura Togo, and both Communists, will it be correct to regard the United States of America and the Dominions Beyond the Seas as a total loss and no insurance?

I presume to doubt it. A Communist, I admit, is an objectionable specimen of humanity, less on account of his economic and religious heresies than on that of his illimitable and invincible idiocy. But idiocy, chemically pure idiocy, may be and often is a catalyst of wisdom. Injection of a drop or two into the Senate might precipitate in that political alembic a considerable amount of wisdom now held in suspension in many gallons of bilge.

For this reason I have always regretted the disappearance from the House of the eminent representative from New York, the Hon. Vito Marcantonio. Off-hand, I cannot recall a single occasion on which Marcantonio made a sensible speech but I am persuaded that on numerous occasions his blatancies so shocked other honorable members that they were momentarily jarred loose from cherished idiocies of their own. A pair of really high-proof Communists in the Senate might have a similar effect in that august assemblage and thereby promote the general welfare.

One effect they would almost certainly produce is that of a clearer realization of what is implied in the Dulles policy of Brinkmanship. Geographically, Hawaii is an outpost, defensible only as we control the Pacific, including the air above and the depths below its surface. As long as it was a mere territory its loss in a disastrous war could be written off when it could no longer be held without excessive cost; yet there would be no question of a betrayal of our pledged word. But now that it is a state it comes under the provisions of Article IV, Section 4, of the Constitution of the United States, declaring that each state shall be guaranteed a republican form of government and protected against invasion. There is no limitation on this provision. Congress henceforth has no power to decide that the further defense of Hawaii will be so expensive as not to be worthwhile. We are now committed to fight for the islands as long as we have a man or a dollar left.

We have staked everything we have on the presumption that we can control the Pacific for the indefinite future. But unless we find some way of ending the Cold War by an amicable agreement, that control will certainly be challenged in the future by the Asian powers, probably including Japan, whose hatred of us, however well concealed, is bound to be deep and bitter.

To assume blithely that we are certain to win such a war is really more than Brinkmanship. It is very close to what the ancient Greeks called *hubris,* and the Old Testament calls the pride that goeth before destruction. Yet to endow an exposed outpost with a political character that makes its fall as deadly a threat to our national existence as would be the fall of Washington is evidence of confidence hard to distinguish from *hubris.*

If, then, the polyglot electorate of Hawaii (better than three-fourths non-Caucasian in 1950) should send a couple of Communist Senators to Washington the jolt to the other 98 might bring some of them to a realization of how far from fact the deliberations of this august body have strayed in recent years.

The jolt might also compel a reappraisal of our defense system, not as regards its purpose but as regards its appearance. As a deterrent that system functions not by reason of what we think of it but of what others, especially potential attackers and potential allies think of it. What is good for General Motors may be good for the United States, but no considerable body of opinion holds that it is necessarily good for India and Pakistan, or even for France and Great Britain.

The question is, what is the effect on the by-standers? But it is precisely this question that both the State Department and Congress have resolutely refused to discuss in public; and the faintly piping voices of a few figures in the background—Adlai Stevenson, for instance—are drowned by the rolling thunder of Senatorial oratory concerning the conspiracy of godless Communism.

Yet there is an ineradicable human tendency to regard the man who holds the gun as the one who is doing the heist. It is not necessarily true. The man with the gun may be a cop; but if he isn't in uniform and doesn't show a badge the crowd cannot be blamed for getting the wrong idea.

TRUMAN recognized the importance of appearances when the Korean affair broke, and he was careful to get the United Nations to give us a large and shiny badge before we pulled a gun. It is since Truman's time that we have dropped Jefferson's principle of showing "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind." If a pair of Communist Senators might help us mind our manners, even that heavy price might not be too much.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

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Is This What the President Means To Say?

THE President has led us to the dead end of the street called "bigger bang for a buck" and "massive retaliation." In the present war of nerves, it is the people of the West and not the Russians whose teeth should be set chattering by Mr. Eisenhower's heated pronouncements at the March 11 press conference. A built-in ambiguity of phrasing always allows one to explain that he does not mean what he seems to mean. But in this instance, such an apology is strained. For he said unmistakably that, ultimatums on Berlin notwithstanding, he did not intend to reconsider the scheduled reduction in forces of the Marines and the Army, because

> we are certainly not going to fight a ground war in Europe. What good would it do to send a few more thousands, or indeed even a few divisions of troops to Europe? I do not see why we would think that we, with something of a half a million troops, Soviet and some German in East Germany with 175 divisions . . . in that neighborhood, why in the world we would dream of fighting a ground war?

Then what kind of a war would we dream of fighting? Presumably a nuclear war. Over Berlin? The President himself has previously all but ruled out this alternative. And again on March 11, he observed that a nuclear war "cannot free anything." If it cannot do that (it is certainly not our purpose to unfree anything), what could justify the use of nuclear weapons? The logic of Mr. Eisenhower's remarks seems to us to be that the US should abolish its nuclear stockpiles and announce to the world that pacifism in the nuclear age is the only practical policy. It is a conclusion that is implicit in the President's announcement that "to use that kind of a nuclear war as a general thing (what does he mean, "a general thing"? Could it be used as a "specific" thing?),

> looks to me a self-defeating thing for all of us, because after all with that kind of release of nuclear explosions around this world, of the number of hundreds, I don't know what it would do to the world, and particularly the northern hemisphere.

Thus having announced to the Russians that they need not fear our ground forces and need not fear nuclear retaliation unless they launch an all-out strike (which is highly unlikely), the President concludes his conference with the staggering QED: "*Therefore*, we will do what is necessary to protect ourselves, but we are never going to back up on our rights and responsibilities."

Or have we totally misinterpreted Mr. Eisenhower's intention? Was this just more budget oratory—aimed at "spending" Democrats? Or was he, in some mysterious way, trying to tell Mr. Khrushchev that if he disturbs peace in Europe, he will be hit with nuclear missiles. If that was his intent, he did not succeed. For in the light of what Mr. Eisenhower has said and of what the Russians know of public opinion in this country and Western Europe, Mr. Khrushchev cannot be expected to believe that if East German troops were to occupy Berlin in order to "maintain order," SAC aircraft loaded with H-bombs would be dispatched to Soviet targets. Read carefully, the President's March 11 analysis signals our adversaries that, short of an all-out attack, they may do just about what they want in Europe; and furthermore, that NATO's ground forces have about as much military utility as a covered wagon on a freeway. If they are only there as a trip-wire to set off "massive retaliation," why are so many there at all? He allows the world two unimaginable alternatives: nuclear war in defense of limited positions in Europe in the event of Communist aggressive action, or no defense at all. In effect, he says: we cannot do what we could do short of suicide (fight a limited, conventional war in Europe), and we will not do what we have weapons to do (wage a nuclear war).

"What," he asks, "would you do with more ground forces in Europe?" The answer, if one may presume to answer the former Supreme Commander of NATO, is that we would use them to fight, hoping—and it is the only hope there is, if one rules out both nuclear war and surrender—that the aggressor would understand early in the fight that the next step would be nuclear attacks of devastating ferocity.

If we are bewildered by Mr. Eisenhower's words, what of the West Berliners? Where are they left? Those who read may run and make their peace with the 175 Soviet divisions.

STILL, some may find the President's comments reassuring, and we have in mind not only the Russian leaders. Wishes will still father thoughts; it is comforting to assume that if the West relaxes, peace will come. *The Nation* magazine says that "General Eisenhower has given an admirable example of composure in these past weeks," and that all of us should "emulate Mr. Eisenhower's soldierly behavior." Composure and calmness thus become synonymous with shutting one's eyes to Soviet strengths and declining the sacrifices that might avert *both* a nuclear holocaust and cheap Soviet victories.

There are, we believe, alternatives of strategy more practical than the President's, and in an article by James E. King, Jr., next week we hope to examine them.

THE EDITORS

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The Sickness of the South

by GRAHAM HUGHES

THE RIM of an erupting volcano is not the best place for detached reflection. But the spectator who watches the turmoil from a helicopter is even less trustworthy for he must always be suspected of indulging in that purest of pleasures, *schadenfreude*. So when a visiting Englishman dares to pick at the tenderest racial lesions of the United States he must begin with a plea that this is done with no spirit of superiority (certainly not after the riots in London's Notting Hill), but only in the hope that his freedom from immediate implication will allow a perspective that may be helpful.

To such an aerial observer it seems that Northern and "liberal" American commentators, faced with the immediate crisis of school integration and watching the slow boiling problem of the general status of the Negro in the South, have on the whole behaved with a remarkable and admirable restraint. Even so the strident crack in the "liberal" voice sometimes breaks through and anger and impatience are laid bare. The impatience is very easy to understand. Here these people see their notions of justice and liberty violated in their own land and the image of the United States defiled in the eyes of the world by an open flouting of what appear to be natural and inevitable interpretations of the federal Constitution. They see the South as hardened in its iniquity, wickedly pursuing a path of oppression and glorying in its injustice. The impulse is to strike out in righteous anger. How long, they say, can we tolerate a minority's defiance of majority rulings, especially when those rulings are so firmly embedded in our deepest convictions of justice and equality? If gentler methods fail, then let's hold them by the nose and cram the law down their throats.

But it is very rarely that men follow a course of conduct which their reason or emotions reveal to them as unjust. If the South offends others, it does not offend itself, at least not in the same open and conscious way. Any society once founded on slavery must stumble along under an outsize load of guilt. In the long run the burden of guilt which the South has stored up for itself will only be increased by its present behavior. But that behavior is the ineluctable outcome of a culture that is tightly woven into the hearts of its people. For the South presents the by no means rare phenomenon of a nation within a nation. Always conscious of peculiarity, of isolation and rejection in simply economic and broadly social ways, it mounted its fantastically gallant challenge in the Civil War and embraced its inevitable defeat. Like an unloved child it rebelled with fury and, like most unloved children, received in return punishment and humiliation. When we think of the strange, unhappy birth of Southern society, of the exacerbation of its unease by the disapproval and hostility of its more powerful neighbor, which was yet more than a neighbor for it was a brother too, climaxing in a hideous family conflict, followed by a harsh "reconstruction," the wonder is that the Southern mood has not been more ugly and twisted than it is. The integration that has all along been most desperately needed—an integration of the South into the American community with an eradication of its doubts and fears—was never attempted until the damage was almost irreparable and even now has only been attempted half-heartedly. The price for the infliction of a similar defeat and perhaps a lesser punishment on Germany in 1918 was the Nazi regime of 15 years later. The price for the neglect of the sickness of the Southern psyche is the constitutional dilemma of today.

A great deal of strength and love must be implicit in the Southern character to have ensured its survival with no more sickness than it has. But a great deal of shame and rage too clamored for expression, and the Negro displays the classic credentials of the scapegoat. He began in the South in misery and poverty; he was very, very different in color and behavior; he became numerous and in some real sense a danger; he was one of the overt causes of the family fight. Afraid, puzzled, beaten and ashamed, the white Southerner was tragically bound by the laws of human neurosis to project his malaise on the Negro. Now the circle has become hard and tight. The invocation of the Negro as a figure of inferiority, to be even feared and hated, has encouraged his social and economic suppression; and the more he is suppressed the more he must be regarded as inferior and feared and hated.

The unrelenting quest must be for a way to break into the circle and help the small minority of white Southerners and all Negroes who want to break out. An essential prerequisite is surely a recognition of the complexity of the problem, an avoidance of the facile and unhelpful

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assumption that white Southerners are just being stubbornly wicked. No substantial progress will be made until the majority of non-Southerners become sophisticated enough to realize that they are dealing with a different culture that has its own logic. To some it may seem to be the logic of barbarism but more truly it is the logic of sickness. In any case an ignorance or lack of understanding of the culture patterns that give conviction to conduct which others, with their different patterns, deplore can only lead to the kind of dismal failure that so often attends missionary activities.

At present a spirited offensive is in progress to change the Southern way of life through juristic weapons. Fresh legislation, fresh interpretation of the constitution and more vigorous enforcement of existing laws are all employed or urged. The offensive gains marginal successes as in the outskirts of Virginia but also meets resistance which becomes more frantic as it is pressed home. This judicial effort is well intentioned and noble but the danger is that it may arouse an exaggerated optimism in liberal and Northern circles about the efficacy of legal means for securing a change in a people's way of life.

Any system of law must answer deep needs in the collective personality of a community if it is to endure. Similarly it will not endure if it contradicts deep personality traits in the people it seeks to regulate. When the behavior patterns of a majority differ radically from those of a distinct, territorially defined and numerous minority, peace can only be secured by a tacit failure to apply to the minority those norms of the legal system which defy their deepest convictions. This, of course, is what happened for so long in the South. Peace is not, let me quickly say, the supreme value in society. Peace may be deliberately broken for the sake of justice. Inertia and abdication in the face of behavior that shocks us is never the right answer. There is, however, urgent need for a critical examination of present reliance on legalistic techniques for bringing pressure to bear on the South, an examination which should stem not from sentimental tenderness or fear of opposition but from an intelligent awareness of the inherent limitations of such techniques.

A minority may successfully be forced in some cases to abstain from positive public action of which the majority disapproves. It is much harder to compel a minority to take positive action or to regulate its private behavior in a way which the majority regards as desirable or necessary. We may successfully prevent people from opening stores or wearing yellow shoes on the streets on Sundays. It is much harder to make them go to church on Sundays or to stop them from wearing yellow shoes at home. The white Southerner's behavior to the Negro is an intimate blend of public and private action and public and private omission. The agencies of law enforcement may have some success in curbing the worst forms of positive public conduct, though even a good deal of this falls quite outside the ambit of the law. They will never be very helpful in the fields of omission and private conduct. Under the best possible conditions the courts can only nibble at the edges of the problem, and the present conditions are the worst not the best.

Much more serious is the possibility that an isolated use of legal methods will only inflame the situation and make an ultimate solution more remote. The Southern character is very ready to fling its arms around another glorious defeat, very ready to ease its burden of anxiety by finding a second set of scapegoats in the Supreme Court, or Northerners in general or Jews in particular. Unfortunately the original scapegoats will not benefit from this. Already there are enough disquieting signs that the main result of the present judicial campaign has been a replenishment of the reservoir of hate and aggression.

THE dilemma is a hideous one, for we have been brought up to believe that we should not shrink from the equal application of the law and the doing of justice by reason of the threats of the unlawful. And at the same time the voice of the victim cries out for help. If we say that we should go slow or that we must be careful because we may make things worse, are we not inviting extremist agitation to resistance and are we not showing a tenderness to the lawbreaker while we ignore the just claims of his victim? This is a naturally righteous reaction but it may be misconceived. The criticism is not that we should go slow but that we should look carefully for the best road. The social problem here can perhaps be illuminated by the lessons to be gathered from the case of the individual delinquent. We have surely learned that a mechanical application of conventional deterrents is a clumsy way of dealing with the criminal. Such methods keep society going in some rough way but they are singularly unsuccessful in abolishing crime. The analysis of the personal and social causes of crime and the development of therapeutic techniques are in their infancy, but they have already proved their worth and promise more. The problem of the South differs from the problem of the individual delinquent only in its size, importance and collective nature. The incessant inquiry ought to be for the best methods of discouraging and reforming Southern habits of social delinquency. Ultimately this can be done only by an effective therapy which will remove from the group of white Southerners the collective sources of their neurotic behavior.

This will be a task of enormous difficulty, mainly because it has been neglected for so long and because the patient, like many patients, is not very anxious for treatment. He doesn't see much wrong with his way of life and would like to be left alone, if you please. The individual delinquent usually feels the same way, but contact with him is easier because he is unable to remove himself from the attentions of those who seek to bring him to a socially acceptable mode of life. The South is

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largely in control of its own education and environment. How should one set about the infinitely slow and colossally burdensome task of changing its heart?

The first essential will be a deliberate taking up of national responsibility toward the South as a disaster area urgently in need of help. A strange sort of disaster, admittedly, for the catastrophe is moral not physical and the victim is unaware of his condition, but nevertheless it is a cataclysm infinitely more damaging to the well being of the United States than any combination of flood, hurricane and earthquake. It is a responsibility which peculiarly ought to be national for the present ill health of the South is largely due to decades of national neglect.

The efforts of any national authority responsible for the cure might thrust in three directions. In the first place there should be a drive to remove the last marks of Southern economic inferiority. The sense of only partial participation in the material benefits of American life has unquestionably been one of the mainsprings of trouble in the Southern mood. An open and public effort, in which private enterprise is offered inducements to coordinate with federal projects to raise the Southern standard of living, would do much to nurture a full sense of attachment to the American community. The psychological effect of such an effort will be that of a confession of past neglect, joined with a regenerative show of love. And the rebellious child is often reconciled by love.

But at the same time the rebellious child must be shown that participation in family privileges has to be matched by an assumption of family responsibilities. The equal treatment of every citizen is an American family responsibility. So any organized campaign for the economic uplifting of the South must be coupled with a governmentally inspired and sponsored attempt to marshal and employ the existing forces that work for education and conciliation. Under the auspices of an official national council for conciliation the exertions of all willing persons would be canalized in an incessant campaign of public and private persuasion. But conciliation here must be understood as an effort to bring recalcitrant deviants to reason and not as a promise of compromise where no compromise is permissible. The great demerit of Sen. Lyndon Johnson's recent proposal for a conciliation service is in its overtones that there are in this area two points of view which equally deserve impartial assessment. This would be a retrogressive abdication of initiative. The proved delinquent may be admitted to correctional therapy but he cannot ask for arbitration after conviction.

Help, persuasion and reason must be accompanied by the intelligent demonstration of authority. At present the exercise of authority is capricious, sporadic and unplanned. What is needed is the coordination of the work of all existing agencies for the suppression of illegal violations of personal liberty and constitutional privilege under a central board, the activities of which should be widely publicized. This body should be invested with the authority to launch and maintain a national campaign of litigation for the removal of such violations, a campaign which should look as sternly at the North as at the South, a campaign which should be strategically and tactically planned to make its moves at the right place and at the right time for maximum effect.

In this way there might be a program in which the offer of material benefits would go hand in hand with an organized educational drive and a planned, though flexible, program of litigation. It would, of course, meet violent opposition. It is not suggested that it would succeed easily, nor indeed that it would succeed at all, but only that it has a much greater chance of success than the way things are done now. At present occasional sharp and violently publicized jabs at the South in the form of judicial decisions are joined with individual and sporadic activity in other directions. Of a plan, of any Executive recognition of the vital need for a policy and its implementation, there is no sign at all. The Administration's proposal for fresh legislation on civil rights which is now before Congress does no more than flirt with the central issue. An impression of busy concern is created by urging trivial or faintly relevant measures. At heart everyone seems vaguely to hope that the courts can do it on their own.

As things are going at the moment there is little hope of a general amelioration and there may be an approaching explosion. It is essential to view legal and judicial activity as only a supplementary form of therapy whose success or failure will depend on the success or failure of a larger plan. No court may deny the protection of the constitution to any citizen who seeks it, and the present proposal is certainly not that the courts should look to the progress of an Executive plan before they extend such protection. But the existence of a plan may well shape the nature of litigation that comes before the courts and we all know these days that the form of a court decision is influenced by social conditions and Executive action. It would be uninformed and unhelpful if it were not. When judicial activity takes place in the framework of a national plan, courts will be able to make more sensible appraisals of the efficacy and therapeutic value of their decisions.

The full and final solution will only come when the majority of the white Southern population sees plainly that it has used the Negro as a symbol on which to fasten its projected anxiety. A deep awareness of this will breed a natural desire to make reparation. And in seeking to cure this sickness of the South none of us ought to feel superior. For many individuals and many groups enjoy their private sickness. The South's is more troublesome than most but not necessarily more blameworthy. The task must be to create a steady climate of opinion in which the fountains of generosity and kindness that are so vital a part of the Southern character can be unlocked.

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Some notes on birds and boundaries

THE WATER RAIL

Louis J. Halle

WE HAVE A WATER RAIL in our front yard. It comes out of the reeds after it has assured itself that no one is looking. Delicately. One foot forward and down. Then the other. Picks lightly at the mud, first here, then there, leaning forward. Twitches up its hind end repeatedly, a nervous habit, showing white beneath the tail in flashes. From a distance what appears is only an obscure body with flashes off and on—at what looks like the head end. (Tail is up, generally, real head down.) Perhaps it fools enemies that way. Jump at it, if you are lustful, and it takes off backward! The hawk or the cats sit foolish, not knowing what has happened.

We have a mud-bank only in spring. Like a water rail disappearing into the reeds the Lake of Geneva recedes gradually. The flat wet mud, ready for toe-prints, separates the low embankment wall at the edge of our lawn from the restless edge of the lake, which runs up in ripples repeating, repeating, trying again and again. (You never see them withdraw. So much in this world is hidden and deceptive!)

The situation in France is clouded and variable. I don't suppose the water rail ever looks that far from its home-ground between lake and lawn. The Jura Mountains are beyond picking distance of its bill. Anyway, it wouldn't understand. But I, with my superb brain, my global vision, cast my gaze across the lake and above the opposite shore to where the clouded and variable situation of France presents itself. The water rail just picks the mud.

FIVE VELVET SCOTERS bob close together in the bay of Hermance, the border village. Atlantic sea ducks, these, who must be in the heart of Europe by mistake. They haven't read the books that tell where they should go for each season. They simply go where they please, undisciplined.

We are in Switzerland, they in France. We must obtain the agreement of two countries (two nation-states of the 20th Century) if we are to see them closer. The gray border-guard nods his head, for his country, and we stalk past him after scoters. (Switzerland agrees.) The guard in blue sits by the fat iron stove in his hut. He belongs to an old civilization. He will not come out in cold weather—not for scoters, not for scoterists. France agrees by default—unless there was an affirmative movement of the eyelids. (So much in this world is hidden and deceptive!) We make a little voyage around France now, a country where velvet scoters find themselves. But the scoters take off, objecting to sharing the same country with us, and enter Switzerland without permission.

Monsieur P., who inhabits Hermance, tells the gray guard that he is often to be seen proceeding up that wagon-track (over there) into France. He wishes to explain that it is not to smuggle cigarettes but for birds. If, for example, he is seen this same night on the brow of that hill, entering or leaving France, his silhouette against the sky, it is for the *bécasse*. (The *bécasse* is the woodcock, which has come early this year and settled in a valley of the Haute Savoie several hundred meters away.)

"*Service*," says the guard, saluting.

AT CHANCY, the frontier-post down the Rhone, the Swiss guard makes us pass an examination. But he has only one question.

"Did you know that those two birds you were looking at were *goélands* [gulls]?"

"*Oui, Monsieur, goélands, argenté* [herring gulls].

"*Passez, Messieurs!*"

SOMETIMES a border-guard will ask: "Do you have anything to declare?" He is speaking for France, or for Switzerland. What an opportunity!

Do I have anything to declare? *Do* I have anything to declare? I should say I do! Listen, France! Listen, Switzerland! . . .

But my throat and chest are suddenly jammed up with all I have to declare. For the moment nothing comes out. The guard mistakes my silence for a negative and waves us on.

MY SUBJECT IS THE WATER RAIL, but speaking about borders. . . . Johnny and I are scooterists. Being nine years old Johnny rides pillion, but counts the days till he is twice as old and may lawfully seize control for

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himself. It is an Italian motor-scooter, a Lambretta. On it he and I have crossed the high Jura in snow and ice (once, at high speed, spilling and sprawling on a lovely curve. You travel on an icy pavement by sliding both feet along the ground, even at 50 kilometers an hour, keeping the machine up that way.) On it we have dashed to distant places, for a look at birds, and back again in time for lunch. It is our true love.

On the scooter, one day, we visited the last city-state. The fall of Rome was accompanied by the rise of San Marino, as by the rise of Venice. The Venetians took refuge on the lagoons of the Adriatic from the triumphant barbarians. The Sanmarinese took refuge on a rock. It rises sheer, like a dream, from the plains behind Rimini. But Venice was importantly involved in the world, and when the Atlantic became navigable she declined. Today she is a city in Italy. San Marino is still an independent city-state, as important as it has ever been.

I lecture Johnny (being bigger than he is). There is the city—towers, turrets, and battlements—trimming the top of the rock that stands above green fields. The green fields are the surrounding and supporting land in which the food is grown. When invaders attack, the fields may be burned, but the population has found refuge within the city walls. Just like Athens and Corinth, like Pylos and Sparta, like Siena, Pisa and Florence. Just like the original Rome on its seven hills. *Nota bene!* End of lecture. (Johnny continues to think of lizards.)

We see no Italian guards at the frontier. But across it are two grandly dressed Sanmarinese (looking like mandarin ducks, *Aix galericulata*). We slow up for a stop. They regard us bewildered, wondering whether we are stopping to question them. Having no questions, unless to ask whether they want to question us, we speed up again, plunging headlong into the Republic of San Marino, toward the citadel, toward the steep road zigzagging up to it. Since we always climb every tower we are allowed to, Johnny and I shall be occupied in San Marino this afternoon.

Coming back in the evening there are no guards on either side of the border. San Marino sleeps. Italy sleeps. Mars sleeps.

NOT FAR from the last city-state is another frontier, the crossing of which changed the history of the world. Scooting down the Via Aemilia from Forli to Rimini we come to a little bridge with a little sign: *Fiume Rubicone*. A terrible decision must be made. We stop the scooter and pull it off the road near a gas-station, getting it out of danger from the heedless trucks. The Rubicon flows along the bottom of a declivity. With only one stepping-stone we could cross it dryshod and have no need of a bridge.

While history remains in suspense, while the Fates themselves hold their breath, Johnny clambers down the side of the declivity to hunt for lizards. The responsibility is on me, and I remain pondering. . . .

At last Johnny returns. We say nothing, but the decision has been taken. Grimly we board the scooter. I no longer hesitate. The time is 14.07 on 15 April, 1957. At full throttle we cross the Rubicon. Turning to John I cry: "The die is cast!" (which means: *Alea jacta est!*)

A few minutes later we carry the eagles into Rimini.

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND John's absorption in lizards. The mystery first impressed itself on me one afternoon when we stood amid the ruins of Ostia, the seaport and beach of ancient Rome. All about us are the remains of villas, baths, academies, theatres, temples; marble columns broken and unbroken; vaulted roofing here and there; often second or third stories to which one can climb; the whole in rolling pasture where shepherds with staffs (but no pipes) tend sheep and the flat-topped pines give blots of shade. (In classical lands these trees are flat-topped; they are spires in gothic lands.) What great thoughts are called for here, here where the Roman patricians once resorted to escape vulgar Rome, to enjoy high society by the sea!

But John is absorbed in trying to catch a lizard that has escaped him among the loose bricks of a staircase. No use saying anything to him. He would not hear, or would pretend not to hear. It comes as a great thought that this is the world of one's own loneliness. . . .

Across the open atrium a flash and suddenly a little bird on a brick-pile—on its toes, alert, dipping its tail repeatedly. I lift my binoculars to my eyes and call out: "John! Quickly! A wheatear!" (He does not hear, so intense in his lizarding.) Now another bird flying low, undulating, in and out among the ruins, hidden, seen again. Lands on a low pedestal and freezes. Sunlight perfect on it, from behind me. "John! Quick! A rock thrush!"

By this time I have crossed the atrium and a courtyard beyond. I have come to the low wire-fence at the edge of the ruins. In the shop pasture beyond are other birds, a pair of warblers that are either white-throats or lesser white-throats. I cross the fence. (Johnny forgotten now.) Farther along, a small bird lands upright against a fence-post and twists its head outlandishly, wryly, to look at me. My first wryneck!

Half an hour later, when I had made my way back to the staircase, I found John as absorbed as ever in his effort to catch the lizard. Here were all the ruins of Ostia about him, here lay the greatest civilization that ever fell, and all he could think about was lizards!

Going to Ostia we had to inquire our way. But returning, we did not ask which road led to Rome.

I, THE NEIGHBOR OF A WATER RAIL, have been a pedestrian in medieval Florence. The mob is compressed in

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the narrow streets, but through the mash automobiles and scooters force their way. Here even scooters must go so slowly that, when one hooks a button on your sleeve, you may have time to unhook it before it is taken off.

In the middle of the Ponte Vecchio Johnny and I are carried forward and back by the mob, from side to side. I keep hold of his hand as one does with a child in the surf. This is the old Ponte Vecchio, I tell myself, of which I have seen so many pictures; of which I must again look at a picture.

Still holding Johnny's hand, I am thrown up against a lady I had known elsewhere. She shouts at me something that sounds like "Isn't it charming?"

"What?" I shout back, cupping my ear.

"Isn't it charming? . . . Isn-n't it char-ming?"

"Yes" is all I have a chance to shout. (Just as well.) I have to attend to John, down below. He wants to know when we get to the Ponte Vecchio.

BUT EVEN FLORENCE is not too bad if you are properly mounted. On a scooter you can cut through the crowd like a dull knife through heavy cheese.

WE HAVE GONE to the Museum of St. Mark especially to look at Fra Angelico's "Last Judgment." I want to show John the detail, in one corner, of the blessed dancing in a ring (though I know he is more interested in the damned). But other visitors are ahead of us, standing in a broken shifting mass before the painting. Occasionally there are openings—but they close up again too quickly. Later, in a shop window, I find a reproduction and am able to show John the dancers.

WE STAND on the Leaning Tower of Pisa and watch two silver jets together swing and sweep around the sky. Like fish, like meteors, like falcons shooting. (A decrescendo of bowstrings plucked and they are past. . . . Now coming again. . . .)Tower, and jets swinging around it, you could hardly say which is lovelier. The Tower is defective art. The jets are closer to nature, purer, like dewdrops on the grass, like fish, like wasps. But they are evanescent, lacking the stability of the unbalanced Tower. In a moment they are gone, but the Tower remains.

In the Cathedral below, Galileo, seeing the great lantern swing at the end of its chain, conceived the principle of the pendulum. The same harmony is in the jets. (Was in the jets.)

OUR FRIENDS IN GENEVA are surprised that we have returned alive and whole after traveling over half Italy on a scooter. But they are no more surprised than I am. I live in the expectation of disaster. The passage of days, weeks, even years without it seems to me miraculous. I am full of gratitude.

Somewhere Montaigne says that his religious impulses are nourished by good fortune but weaken in adversity. He prays best when things go well. This is my case too. It seems to me that I lack adequate endowments for successful survival in this treacherous world. Yet I survive and, beyond all reason, prosper. Disaster snoops around me, sometimes crouches for the final spring. But always there is the unexpectable coincidence, a letter in the mail, an encounter in the street. . . . Disaster snoops away again. It seems to me that my case is the opposite of Job's in the Old Testament. I cannot believe that I do not owe a debt of gratitude somewhere. I thank God.

OUR COMMON MORALITY stands most easily on its head. The Pharisee who identified himself with virtue on the street-corners was denounced as a sinner by Christ but it is he whom we account moral. We revere the man who presumes to speak for God and are shocked by the man of no faith, the agnostic, the one who says he does not know.

I like the oracle who found Socrates the wisest man in the world because he knew his own ignorance. It has not been given us to apprehend ultimate realities. The best thing is to acknowledge this, where we don't know to say we don't know.

But this can be dangerous. We go by easy steps from: *Socrates does not know anything about God* to *Socrates does not believe in God* to *Socrates denies God.* Yet it is evident now, when all passions have been spent, that Socrates was moved by a sense of divinity more than the mass of his fellow citizens who had Faith.

Perhaps, if the hemlock had been handed to the right parties, Athens would have been depopulated.

Belief should not have to be absolute. Why can I not say (since it is the case) that I do not know whether there is such a being as God, but then I think there is something of the sort, or I feel intimations of such a power?

Experience has taught me to be grateful when things go well, though this may be vanity. Experience has made me feel that I must try to be worthy of good fortune, that while the unknown power seems to be understanding and forgiving (in my case), my own deserving must still be looked to. But I have no way of knowing whether this has any meaning in theological terms. I act on the best intimations which experience has furnished me, and take comfort in them, without certain knowledge of what they represent.

If I should hear voices such as came to Joan of Arc, if God should appear to me as he did to Moses, still I could not be sure, in the absolute sense, that the experience was not a hallucination. It reaches me through channels

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I cannot trust. Though moved by religious experience, I would still be an agnostic.

We should not close our eyes to reality in order to enjoy visions.

Meanwhile, I am grateful that we are back alive and whole.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND how Mrs. Calvin's son John knew for sure the basis on which God separates the saved from the damned (he not having interviewed God or been in the afterworld himself yet).

Speaking of boundaries. . . . If mankind inhabited a land bounded by a mountain-range beyond which no one had ever seen, there still would be men to describe the landscape on the other side. And we would believe them, rather than bear the burden of recognized ignorance.

THE WATER RAIL, I find, is still in Geneva. The lake is lower than ever and the rail would have more mud to pick at, except that now he cannot bring himself to leave the reeds at all. I see him only in glimpses through their margin, still stalking and picking, head down. He has no great thoughts. He will die, someday, and perhaps that same Johnny Calvin will not admit him to the afterworld.

ON MAY DAY we were awakened by the first cuckoo of the year. It was 5768 o'clock.

To the native, the clock imitates the bird. To the visitor from overseas it is the other way around.

Because King Richard II grew a companion to the common streets, because he was daily swallowed by men's eyes, so, when he had occasion to be seen he was but as the cuckoo is in June, heard, not regarded. Let this be a lesson to the cuckoo!

IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN all cities straddle rivers (since they must have bridges), like Geneva. Like Geneva, they all stand at the ends of lakes. All cities are the size of Geneva (pop. 200,000). All have, as their center, a hill with a church on top. All are environed by plains and mountains. All have Geneva's weather, including the black *bise*.

The north wind rises with force, sweeping whitecaps along the lake and sending waves up on shore. In no time a wizard's black invests the atmosphere. The landscape is obscured by a smokiness, your view is veiled. Sky heavy overhead, threatening rain which does not come—never comes. But every day it gets colder, and more of an ordeal to cross the Pont du Mont Blanc, which gets the *bise* full in the flank.

Then you notice one evening that the *bise* is moderating. Fewer whitecaps. At dusk the sky clears. All the wizard's black vanishes, leaving an interim radiance before the crystal darkness of night. Next day the sun rises brilliantly in a clear sky. Everything is blue and white and windy. You still have the *bise*, but no longer a black *bise*, and in a few days it will have blown itself out.

"THE BISE in the trees makes the birds sneeze," says Julie.

I have some mighty foolish children.

For example, it is of the utmost importance to them to keep track of the lake steamers. Mark announces at lunch that the *General Dufour*, the *Savoie*, the *Valais*, and the *Montreux* were in port this morning. (But the *Vevey* was missing.) Smoke was trickling from the *Montreux's* stack. (This makes everyone gratified and expectant.)

Later there is a shout: "A lake steamer!" Everyone rushes to see. There she is proceeding majestically up the lake, sparkling in the sunshine, a bone in her teeth.

Which is she? Which is she?

I rush to the study for my binoculars (while everyone speculates and argues), rush out on the porch with them to look at the gold letters on the paddle-wheel housing. "It *is* the *Montreux*!" Wild excitement. (Everybody: "It *is* it *is* the *Montreux!*") Now contentment settles on the household. We are fulfilled. . . .

Such childishness, after all! It makes no difference what boat it is. There is no reason for interrupting lunch, for everyone leaping from their seats, just because a lake steamer goes by.

(With me it is the scientific impulse. Just as I must know what species of bird that is on our beach, so I must know which steamer. It is the business of science to put names to things.)

We simply cannot have this perpetual disorder. The children are utterly undisciplined. Nothing to do but bark at them. "Get back to the table, everyone!" I shout.

Mrs. Calvin's boy John, I am sure, never occupied his mind with the names of boats.

(Has anyone seen the *Vevey?*)

WHAT I STARTED TO SAY was . . . I was going to remark how essential it was that the Kingdom of Heaven have irregular and unpredictable alternations of heavenly and hellish weather. Otherwise the heavenly weather would be but as the cuckoo is in June. . . .

Moreover, bad weather is good. It satisfies the ascetic in me. (The gods can see that I don't have it all easy.) Let the wind and the rain strike, let the heating system break down. (This is better than drowsing in the tropics.) Not for too long, though.

I CANNOT TELL WHERE, but somewhere on its way from Geneva to the Camargue the *bise* becomes no longer the *bise*. The poetry of Provence infects its identity and it becomes the *mistral*.

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BOOKS & COMMENT

Eros and the Embassy

by Frank J. Warnke

Mountolive, the third volume of Lawrence Durrell's projected tetralogy on love, art, and politics in modern Alexandria, is not as lushly ornamental as the earlier volumes, *Justine* and *Balthazar*, but it is no less disturbing in its explorations and no less dazzling in its technical accomplishments. In fact, the immediate impact of *Mountolive* is greater than that of its companions, or its "siblings," as Durrell calls them—partly because of its more direct narrative movement, partly because its radical tilting of the characters and relationships established in the first two books gives it an additional impetus or irony. It is, as Durrell promised in the prefatory note to *Balthazar*, a "straight naturalistic novel." *Justine* was the first-person narrative of Darley, a young Englishman leading a life of impoverished, desperate, and precarious sensitivity in a city which has come to impose its will on him—a will compounded of irresistible sensuality, religious mystery, and an inexhaustible past which is somehow always potently present. It dealt with his self-torturing love for the enigmatic Alexandrian Jewess Justine, the wife of a millionaire Coptic financier, a woman whose sexual excesses never succeed in masking the temperament of an ascetic. In *Balthazar* the same narrator investigated his experiences anew, this time with the aid of an "interlinear" supplied by his friend Dr. Balthazar, heir to the Platonic traditions of Alexandria and adept at the mysteries of the kabbalah.

Mountolive, by Lawrence Durrell (Dutton; $3.95).

Balthazar cast a systematic doubt on all the realities of character and motivation which Darley had assumed in the narrative of *Justine*. Most significantly, the interlinear revealed that Justine's affair with him had been merely a mask for her love for Pursewarden, another English writer living in Alexandria. *Mountolive* turns the screw of relativity more relentlessly. Omniscient narration replaces the first-person focus; Darley sinks to the level of a minor character (that the name is a rough anagram for "Durrell" may or may not be significant); the fevered, *fin-de-siècle* word-painting of the Alexandrian scene is chastened to a harder, more pitiless kind of description; and the hectic, obsessive concern with the theme of sexual love is transformed into a vision of human beings who are driven by other things as well—despair, greed, and the hopeless disease of politics.

In the opening chapter of *Mountolive*, forty pages of sustained brilliance for which it is hard to find a match in contemporary fiction, David Mountolive, a young British diplomatic officer, passes two months as the guest of a Coptic family on their great estate. There he learns something of history from the senior Hosnani, becomes the friend of the two sons, Nessim and Narouz, and becomes the lover of Hosnani's wife, Leila. At the end of the chapter he is transferred to a new post and, with love and longing, leaves Egypt, Leila, and his youth behind. At the beginning of the second chapter many years have passed and it is the late 1930's—the period of the events of *Justine* and *Balthazar*. Leila is middle-aged, her face marred by smallpox; Nessim has married Justine; the writer Pursewarden is employed as a British agent in Alexandria; and Mountolive is appointed ambassador to Egypt.

For the most part we see the action through the eyes of Mountolive himself, but in the important middle section of the book the focus shifts to Pursewarden and at the end to Nessim. The action itself, like that of *Justine* and *Balthazar*, alternates between delicate speculation and relentless violence: like the other books, it ends with a murder, and it also contains Pursewarden's suicide—for motives which may or may not be supported by the final volume of the tetralogy when it appears. But the central movement of the novel is the degeneration of Mountolive's character, the inevitable consequence of his commitment to the world of politics and to the illusion that he himself is capable of a meaningful individual decision or action on the political level. Faced with the evidence of a political conspiracy headed by Nessim, he is incapable of any action other than those dictated by convention, and his awareness of his impotence becomes his awareness of his degeneration—"Crossing the hall he caught sight of his own face in the great pier-glass and was surprised to notice that it wore an expression of feeble petulance." Pursewarden, who seems to have chosen suicide in preference to deciding between betrayal of his friend Nessim and betrayal of his trust, has chosen the better part. The motto of *Mountolive* could well be the famous dictum of Nijinsky—"Politics is death."

But although the novel focusses on politics as an essence of human behavior, it does so ultimately to further Durrell's exhaustive study of love as its quintessence. *Justine* was dominated by the image of the mirror, a crucial symbol for sexual love, which has its true object not the beloved but the lover's projection of himself. (The novel is preceded by a quotation from Freud: "I am accustoming myself to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved.") In particular, the mirror is associated with Justine herself, who tends to make her entrances in the novel as reflected in a mirror. *Balthazar* took its form from the related image of the mask, the pattern culminating in the macabre pre-Lenten ball which concludes the book, in which its characters, all wounded or disfigured physically or spiritually, make their disguised appearance in search of the illusive enticements of love. *Mountolive* develops both these symbols. Early in the book, when Leila reveals her love (a love founded on her confusion of him with her ideal conception of England), Mountolive takes her in his arms, "stumbling forward like a man into a mirror." And when they finally meet again, Leila has removed her customary veil to show him a face which destroys his illusions, making it irrefutably clear

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that he has loved only his own dream. *Mountolive* is a harsh and disturbing book; it is appropriate that its dominant symbol is neither mirror nor mask but the great whip which Narouz, Nessim's religious fanatic brother, keeps always with him.

Politics is death — physically for Pursewarden, spiritually for Mountolive. It brings death also to Narouz, killed by the Egyptian police in the last chapter. And it represents death in a very curious way for Justine and Nessim, who, it is revealed in *Mountolive,* have been brought together by Nessim's conspiracy to smuggle arms into Palestine. The idea of power and the idea of danger combine to create in Justine a kind of sexual excitement which her compulsive search has never before brought her; the love-making of the two becomes a death-devoted parody of true *eros.* In the prefatory note to *Balthazar,* Durrell says, "the central topic of the book is an investigation of modern love." *Mountolive* is the most bitter stage of that investigation. At the end of the novel Mountolive is left to the comforts of a pet dog, Nessim and Justine to pursue their driven destinies, and Darley, presumably, to continue his highly rhetorical meditations on the betrayals of love—Justine's betrayal of him, his own betrayal of his mistress, the wistful Melissa. Narouz has died crying out, "in the cavernous voice of a wounded lion," the name of the woman he loves with a consuming passion, a woman whom he has spoken to only once and who is repelled by his hare-lip and his primitive vigor.

The name on his dying lips is "Clea," and we are told that *Clea* is the title of the forthcoming final volume of the tetralogy. This title, together with the fact that each of the novels thus far has ended with a reference to Clea, leads me to succumb to the hazards of prophecy. I think it probable that the resolution of Durrell's work will be in religious terms. Not, however, in specifically Christian terms. The evocation of the city of Alexandria which is perhaps the most overwhelming single feature of *Justine* is done largely through the complex opposition of sensuality and spirit, the opposition explored most thoroughly centuries ago by those saints of philosophy who are Alexandria's most typical spokesmen—Plotinus and his neo-Platonic disciples, the Hermetic philosophers, the authors of the kabbalah. Like his countryman Yeats, Durrell finds himself "caught in the sensual music" of the world of things, and like him he seems to hope for a release in the mystico-magical doctrines of the eastern Mediterranean. Clea has been Justine's lover (the sexual life of Durrell's Alexandrians is nothing if not varied), but the experience has not in any way nullified the absolute charity which is the strongest element in her character. It is possible that her novel will point the way toward a reality of love which is something other than a dark communion with one's own ego.

Virginia Woolf, writing in the late 1920's, predicted that the most important future development of the novel would be its taking over of some of the attributes of poetry, without losing its distinctive prose quality by yielding to the dubious allures of "prose poetry." The three volumes of Durrell's tetralogy make up perhaps the most important poetic expansion of the range of the novel since the last works of Virginia Woolf herself. At the same time, in their powerful narrative drive, their bold use of violence, and their occasional full-bodied humor, they are in the great tradition of English fiction. Despite their frequent flights into preciosity, despite their occasional splashes of melodrama, Lawrence Durrell's books are a major achievement, for through them the vitality of the 19th Century has come coursing back into the English novel.

How To Read a Russian Novel

by Irving Howe

There are surely in Russia today a number of talented writers who feel they must try to outwit the censors; they may not be principled opponents of the regime yet, it may be surmised, they would like to write with a certain honesty. Now this is an important fact to be considered when one reads a Russian novel, but so too is the fact that the censorship remains. As a consequence, one needs some nimbleness in trying to make out a Russian novel: one must attend both to what the author is saying and what one surmises he would like to but cannot say. Not only must the critic consider, in the usual ways, the relationship between the writer and his material; he must try to discover the relationship between the writer and the state, insofar as this can be gleaned from a close examination of the text. The possibilities for error are obvious.

Comrade Venka, by Pavel Nilin, translated by Joseph Barnes. (Simon & Schuster; $3.75).

Problems of this order are raised by *Comrade Venka,* a recent best-seller in the Soviet Union. Simply as a novel, it is amusingly, even impudently shallow: a blend of adventure and apologetics. If there were less Victorian prudishness and a greater readiness to acknowledge the anxieties that its subject arouses, the book could be regarded as a Russian *Executive Suite.*

But we cannot stop here. For while we know that *Executive Suite* reveals its author's soul to malicious perfection, there can be no comparable certainty in regard to *Comrade Venka* and Pavel Nilin. The book was written during the "thaw," which was still very far from freedom; it makes a plea for the elements of decency in public life, but within the bounds of the Communist ethos; and it never thinks or dares to inquire whether the decency to which it strains is compatible with the ethos to which it bows.

The question then arises: Is Nilin simply repeating Khrushchev's phrases or is he repeating them in order to release some inner feelings, to smuggle out some long-suppressed sentiments of grief? I think the answer is the first; yet it is just barely possible that Nilin is a writer who burns with resentment against the dictatorship but has decided to play a cautious game.

So far as one can gather from the text itself, Nilin's criticism of the Stalinist legacy proceeds not from any profound attachment to the values of freedom but from a standpoint fairly close to Khrushchevite orthodoxy. That, in fact, is what makes it an interesting,

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perhaps important book. It strays somewhat beyond the party line, but in literature the only way effectively to defend the line is to take a few minor liberties. Yet even if this was Nilin's intention, and we cannot be sure, the novel has a certain objective significance as an expression of the recent inner strains in the totalitarian world: all is not as harmonious there as Mikoyan whispers to Cyrus Eaton.

Set in the early twenties, when the Bolshevik government was still conducting campaigns against White and bandit armies in Siberia, *Comrade Venka* centers upon a group of secret policemen (Chekists) whose responses to the peasant enemy, ranging from brutal to humane dogmatism, are made to seem an anticipation of things to come. Venka himself is an honest, straight-laced and fairly likable chap; in our country he'd be arranging church suppers and fretting about ethics of dating. In Siberia he wins the confidence of a peasant guerrilla (the only character who comes alive) and thereby arranges for a peaceful submission by the "bandits." At the last minute, however, the Cheka boss, wishing to show the weight of the party's fist, violates the agreement and brutally arrests the peasants. Both Venka and the peasants feel they have been betrayed; in despair, Venka blows his brains out.

There are nice touches in the book. A recalcitrant peasant answers a Chekist threat: "We'll all be stretched out . . . sometime. . . . That's something you can't duck either." Speculating on the malice of an orthodox Communist, the narrator permits himself a heresy in individual psychology: "Maybe . . . he says these words just to cover up some failure in life." And when Venka boasts to the peasants on how marvelous the *taiga* will be once it has been industrialized, one of them slyly asks: "Where will the birds and animals go?"

Comrade Venka is "readable" (that sad euphemism of American reviewing for "mediocre") since Nilin writes with a craftiness that can pass for creativeness.

But in spite of its surface vivacity, the novel reminds one of how decades of enforced isolation and/or the power of a ruthless state have dried up the sense of human possibility among the younger Russian novelists. It is as if the dimension of human complexity and moral reflectiveness had been banished in behalf of a hearty *partiinost* mindlessness.

Perhaps the crucial passage in the novel is one where Venka argues against using terror during police interrogations and, with unconscious cynicism, explains why it is "better" for Communists to try persuasion first:

> Here I sit, and there's the arrested man. He's alone. There's nobody behind him. Behind me there's the law, the government, cannon, machine guns, all the power there is. Why should I get mad at the arrested man?

What this suggests is that, with the modernization of the dictatorship, there can develop a kind of Communist *kitsch* that will absorb and disarm critical sentiments in much the same way that our middle-brow novels do. It provides a rationale for the Khrushchevite stabilization of the regime: a dictatorship resting not on the incessant use of terror but on terror-in-being. Still, it remains possible that the effort to loosen the reigns from above, of which *Comrade Venka* seems a consequence, can lead to fissures in the authority of the state that will permit authentic expressions from below.

Crime, Trial and Execution

by Daniel M. Friedenberg

JUDGE CURTIS BOK, recently elected to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, has written a deeply compassionate book attacking the roots of our penal system. Out of a lifetime of experience as a lawyer and then judge, Mr. Bok has weighed the system of justice and found the symbolic lady not only blindfolded but deaf and dumb as well. *Star Wormwood* is the story, freely drawn from an actual case history, of a boy put to death at the age of seventeen for murder in the first degree. The book is divided into three parts, the Crime, the Trial and the Execution, with a legal comment following each of the novelized sections.

Star Wormwood, by Curtis Bok (Knopf; $3.95).

Roger Haike, brought up in poor and loveless conditions, strangled a girl of thirteen, stuffed her body into an incinerator and ate part of her broiled arm. He was also accused of rape, but this could not be proved. The defendant admitted to murder and stated, in order to explain his cannibal action, that he had not eaten for three days previous to the event. From these seemingly-simple facts, Judge Bok analyzes both the background leading to the crime and the methods society has evolved to deal with such cases. His conclusion is a violent protest against what he calls "punitive penology."

La Rochefoucauld started off his book of moral reflections with the remark that what we take for virtue is often only an assembly of diverse actions and interests that fortune or our industry arranges. The implication that vice is a similar result of misfortune or lack of industry, is the starting point for Judge Bok. We are all more or less "sick or crazy" but superior intelligence, love and education aid the fortunate in suppressing their illegal desires. "People are born good but must learn evil," says the Judge, and the fact that Voltaire refuted Rousseau on the same point in the 18th Century does not disturb him. Psychiatric proofs are submitted in place of the biologic evidence preferred by earlier criminologists. Roger Haike was a decent boy inspired to a bad act by the fact that his father said he would eat him when he was a child. Poor Roger. Poor Ilsa Koch, who liked to make lampshades out of human skin because her mother had long glowing hair. Poor Trujillo, poor Batista; we must understand.

Judge Bok acknowledges that what led to the hanging jury was the cannibalistic act following the murder; putting the words in the mouth of one of his characters: "The hungry people on the jury probably never ate anybody, and that's what will kill Roger." But this is a minor aberration; "let us not be squeamish," he says. Chronos in Greek legend ate his children. Christians take communion. What happens in the corners and byways of "dissecting-rooms, embalming-parlors, hospitals, and medical schools?" We get a sudden vision of thousands of medical students

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BERTRAND RUSSELL SAYS OF I. F. STONE'S WEEKLY . . .

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stealthily chewing human knuckles. The appeal is unconvincing. The fundamental question is whether society has the right to "murder" even the monsters, to revenge itself against a Bluebeard or a Hitler. The case is much harder; *regardless* of the iniquity, is the death sentence justified?

Curtis Bok is on much firmer ground when he defines Justice as usually another name for winning one's case. The "usually" is his sop to traditional morality; what he really means to say is that only custom determines the just or, put in the classic sense, that justice is the interest of the stronger. Thus, since those who transgress are only slightly more "sick or crazy" than we, treatment and not judicial murder is the right solution.

At bottom, even juries today agree more and more that trial is a punitive and not a curative system. The author points out that a change from more severe to more lenient criminal laws usually results in a decrease in the crime rate. The 60 percent repeater rate in prisons drops abruptly with the improvement of prison environment. Prisoners who are taught to accept, and not merely endure punishment, have a better social history after release. The final truth of modern penology is close to the Sermon on the Mount.

One has a complicated reaction to Judge Bok's book. In theory, most decent people today reject capital punishment. But some of the things done in this world of men nauseate to the point that the theory breaks down. I have a friend whose genitals were pricked by electric needles in Cuba. Can we expect this man to regard Batista and his henchmen with Christian humility or abstract stoicism? Can people free themselves from the spirit of revenge and treat mad dogs as mere sick persons, only slightly sicker than themselves? And will legislatures grant funds for expensive therapy and reeducation?

We owe Curtis Bok a debt for the clarity with which he analyzes the question. Justice, he affirms, must indeed be blindfolded, blind to the interest and sentiment of the injured party as well. For society is the loser when revenge replaces human values. Putting aside Mr. Bok's psychiatric musings which have the limited value of the biologic musings in the last century, the truth that there are no criminals but only sick men must, if we pretend to civilization, be followed by a new and more effective be followed by a more effective campaign against the sources of this sickness.

We Are Few

by Boris Pasternak

We are few. Perhaps three: a dark
Infernal lot, embittered, wet
Beneath a grey and racing bark
Of rains, low clouds, the soviet
Of soldiers, debates and curses,
Disputes about fares and verses.

We used to be men. Now, an era in time.
We are swept on caravan trails
As the tundra's swept in the grime
Of pistons, tender, and rails.
We swoop, break through, interpose,
And are off, a whirlwind of crows.

You'll not understand till late.
When winds in the morning confound
The thatch of the roofs, a debate
In the congress of trees will resound,
Astir with immortal speech
Where the shingled roofs do not reach.

1921

Translated from the Russian
by Eugene M. Kayden

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MOVIES

Fernandel Twice

"WHAT sort of film do you most like acting in?" Fernandel was asked in a recent *Punch* interview.

"One with sufficient depth for me to spread myself," he replied. "And it must have pathos . . . The public used to like me in simple comic parts, as a clown, but taste developed with the war and now they want fuller characters with more honesty."

Forbidden Fruit (Films-Around-The-World); *The Law is the Law* (Continental)

These preferences are reflected in the two latest Fernandel films to be released here. The first, *Forbidden Fruit,* is remarkable chiefly because in it he plays a "straight" part, a middle-aged doctor of Arles, a respectable married man, who makes a trip to Marseilles and gets involved with a *femme fatale.* She comes to Arles, and the doctor very nearly wrecks his home and career over her; however—out of boredom and compassion for his foolishness—the girl leaves. It is probably unnecessary to add that the script is based on a Simenon novel.

Françoise Arnoul is provocative as the girl who knows she is a light-headed drifter, doesn't particularly like it, but doesn't see any point in pretending that she is otherwise. Fernandel, who cannot entirely preclude some comic touches, is effective enough, but the feeling persists that one of several other French actors would have been at least as good, and meanwhile Fernandel might have been doing something that they could not do. However, in the long-range view of his career, it is understandable that he would want to essay a few dramatic parts as leaven.

The picture's weakness is the script, which manages to be both predictable and meandering and which fizzles out at the end. Still, as in many French films, the cast and the director (Henri Verneuil here) are so good at creating a world that one almost believes that this is how it happened and that it was life's fault, not the screenwriters', for not making the story more dramatic.

The Law is the Law, a comedy, is quite a different case. Far from being thin and familiar, it is jam-packed with novel situations and plot twists. So much so, in fact, that you get the impression of being served one of those Broadway delicatessen three-decker sandwiches crammed with individually tasty things that tend to cancel out each other's flavor.

When the film was announced a few years ago, it seemed an inspiration: a picture that would unite Fernandel, the French comic idol, with Toto, his Italian counterpart. And what better place to set it than in a town that straddles the French-Italian border? And why not have Fernandel, with his immense, open face, play a customs guard and have Toto, whose face is incapable of an honest expression, play a smuggler? And to tie the two men in a further knot, why not have Toto married to Fernandel's ex-wife? And then suppose that, just when the guard thinks he has caught the smuggler, Toto discovers that Fernandel was born in the Italian end of an inn that is literally on the border, thus he is not even a Frenchman and cannot legally be a guard.

From these premises the plot grows—full of basically funny ideas; but if you see the film—and it is worth seeing—you may find that you are not laughing as much as you keep expecting to. Your mind tells you that the story is funnier than your emotions find it to be. Part of the reason for this—and this may sound ungrateful after the comments on the first script—is a feeling that the film has been so meticulously contrived, every inch of it so ingeniously engineered for laughter, that, good as the contrivances are, they begin to draw attention to themselves.

Another handicap is that the director, Christian-Jaque, does not have the requisite light touch. Scenes seem to be plunked down in front of you with a kind of heavy cadence instead of being skimmed through with just enough time allowed them to generate credibility without becoming real.

And that also is what is generally wrong with Fernandel's performance—the third major reason for this picture's disappointment. Much of his comic playing is, as usual, fine; but he has taken too much to heart his own dictum as quoted above and has tipped too much pathos into the dish. When he is deported from the French end of town and has to leave his family, he is genuinely desolate. When (because he is now Italian) the *carabinieri* discount his French army record and accuse him of being a draft-dodger, he is shocked to his soul. These things were meant to be funny, but Fernandel, looking for "sufficient depth," has played these and other scenes as if they were grounded on irrevocable tragic fact, instead of on a teeter-totter burlesque hypothesis. Virtually any comic situation, from a banana-peel pratfall on up the scale, becomes sad, perhaps tragic, if the facts of the matter are taken out of comic disproportion into the true relevances of life. Chaplin's hungry tramp is funny because it is an abstraction; less than all the pertinent facts are given. The outcasts of *The Lower Depths* are not funny because the picture is complete.

In that sense it can be said that comedy doesn't really happen at all. It is only what *would* happen if . . . The moment we identify with it and feel it truly happening to ourselves, it ceases to be amusing.

TOTO, whose revues have long been the delight of Rome, is a marvelously skillful performer. His leathery nutcracker face, his obviously dyed black hair, his wizened graceful body, all incarnate guile; and everything he does is redolent of years of experience in leading people by the funnybone. But in this film he never lets up. He bombards us so continuously with wry grimaces and eloquent gestures that it is all high spots, no preparation. His performance is not overdone in the usual sense. Any one element in it is done perfectly. But, like the script, it is so stuffed with invention that eventually it makes us conscious of his workmanship instead of his work.

All this may—but should not—make the film sound dull. There is considerable fun in it, there are competent performances by a large cast, there is the chance to see two extraordinary comedians playing together. The above is written out of regret that what might have been a memorable film is only a reasonably enjoyable one.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

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RECORDS

String-Players and Choruses

WHEN Casals' performances of the Bach suites for unaccompanied cello were first issued before the war, I said that the inflection of tone and phrase in the Sarabandes of Nos. 1 and 2 or the Allemande of No. 6 was something one would almost not believe one had heard, but that one could move the needle back to the beginning of the movement on the record and find that it happened again, and that the performance was there on the record for all time, as other such achievements were on canvas or in print. But my last statement was invalidated when the records of the Bach suites were discontinued by RCA Victor; and only now that Angel has reissued the performances in the Great Recordings of the Century series on COLH-16, 17 and 18 can one again place the stylus at the beginning of one of those movements and hear the extraordinary performance as often as one pleases. And having done this I have found, as I did years ago, that the life on the records is solely in the performances, not in the dull music—the exciting life created by the powerful inflection of a tone unique in its color and tensile strength in the powerful shaping of phrase.

A Great Recordings of the Century series should reissue the pre-war Casals performances of Beethoven's cello sonatas, which also have moments that leave one almost not believing what one has heard—e.g. the moment in the great slow movement of Op. 102 No. 2 when the opening section returns, and Casals gives the cello's comments on the piano's statements a form by timing and inflection, and in this way an expressive effect, that I have heard in no other performance—not even Casals' own recent one on Columbia. But there has been no word about these performances in the announced plans for the series until now; and I suggest that interested music lovers write to Angel Records (1730 Broadway, New York) to request the reissue.

Haydn Society continues its reissue of the superb Schneider Quartet performances of Haydn quartets with Op. 76 Nos. 3 (*Emperor*) and 4 (*Sunrise*) on 9058 and Nos. 5 and 6 on 9065. These are fine works, with individual movements—e.g. the beautiful first movements of Nos. 4 and 5—that are outstanding.

Ever since Columbia's withdrawal of the Fournet performance of Berlioz's *Requiem* there has been no performance of professional caliber available on records. The participants in the performance on Westminster WXN 2227—the chorus of the French Radio, the orchestra of the Paris Opera, the tenor Jean Giraudeau and the conductor Hermann Scherchen—are professionals; but Scherchen is in addition an eccentric; and his eccentricity in this performance is to play the work in tempos considerably slower than the ones Berlioz sets with the metronome—the result being a constant lethargic dragging that is highly damaging to the effect of the music. (In addition he changes the principal theme of the *Lacrymosa.*) The orchestra is good; the chorus is fair; and Giraudeau's beautiful voice manages the tax-ingly high-ranging solo in the *Sanctus* without disturbing strain.

ANOTHER good performance of Mozart's *Requiem,* this one conducted by Karl Boehm on Epic LC-3507, has the Vienna Symphony, the chorus of the Vienna State Opera and a solo group comprising Teresa Stich-Randall, Ira Malaniuk, Waldemar Kmentt and Kurt Boehme. The recently issued performance conducted by Kempe, on Capitol-EMI G-7113, has even better soloists and the superior Berlin Philharmonic; and the rhetorical expansiveness of Walter's older performance on Columbia ML-5012 makes it more powerfully expressive than both of the others.

London has reissued on Oiseau-Lyre 50166 two works that were at one time on two 10-inch records: Purcell's engaging *Come Ye Sons of Art* and a *Miserere* of Lully which has beautiful and moving pages. Anthony Lewis conducts excellent performances with the sopranos Margaret Ritchie and Elsie Morison, the tenors Richard Lewis and William Herbert, the counter-tenor Alfred Deller, and choral and instrumental groups.

Vanguard 1036, *Music from Washington Cathedral*, offers on its first side beautiful pieces by Morley, Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, Palestrina, Victoria, Schuetz and Bach, and on the second side a number of modern pieces, of which Horatio Parker's *Jam Sol Recedit Igneus* is the most impressive, Samuel Barber's *Let Down the Bars, O Death!* has some lovely-sounding polyphony, and Vaughan Williams' *For All the Saints* is engaging. The performances by the Washington Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys under Paul Callaway's direction are agreeable-sounding and sensitively phrased.

SEVERAL examples of the lovely vocal polyphony of Palestrina—*Sicut cervus, Soave fia morir, O beata et benedicta et gloriosa, Adoramus te Christe* and *Stabat mater dolorosa*—are on Angel 35667, with the more dramatic *Lamento d'Arianna: Lasciatemi morire* and *Ch'io t'ami* of Monteverdi. In them the tone of the Netherland Chamber Choir under Felix de Nobel's direction is transparent and radiant, the inflection of tone and phrase sensitive and movingly expressive.

Victor LM-2254 has a beautiful Requiem Mass by Victoria, of which the plain-chant passages are sung well by the Choir of the Abbey of Mt. Angel under Dom David Nicholson's direction, and Victoria's polyphony is sung well by the Portland Symphonic Choir under C. Robert Zimmerman's direction.

And Epic LC-3540 gives us the performance of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum* in St. John's Church, Gouda, that was part of the Holland Festival's commemoration of the Handel Bicentennial. The fine work—characteristic in its imposing orchestral proclamations, its impressive and affecting choruses and solos—is sung well in English by the Choir of the Netherlands Bach Society and soloists with orchestra and organ under the direction of Anthon van der Horst.

B. H. HAGGIN

Notes on Contributors

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TELEVISION

The Censorship of Television

> Mrs. Nosey Parker to Mrs. Grundy: "You were a great pioneer, but you made the mistake of trying to suppress people's pleasure. I try to spoil their pleasure. It's much more effective."
>
> —E. M. FORSTER.

A YOUNG, alert and nominally liberal mother of two protested in my presence some weeks ago, a bit of forthright sensuality she had seen on *Playhouse 90*. "Children shouldn't be exposed to that; they can't judge in perspective. I don't believe in censorship," she said, "but it shouldn't be allowed." Three weeks ago the same sort of thing turned up on *World of Ideas* (12:30 Sundays, CBS), a free wheeling seminar conducted by Dr. Charles Frankel, a Columbia philosophy professor, who asked his circle of visitors whether censorship of the arts is ever justified. To a man they answered: "No. But . . ." Not an 18th-Century soul stood forward to say that liberty by definition is freedom from censorship.

There was no mistaking their passion, nor the flush of anger in the eye of my mother of two. PTA, Catholic and miscellaneous Nosey Parkers and Mrs. Grundys are actively campaigning in New York and Maryland for legislation to censor movies, and the prevailing mood is summed up by a Baltimore lady explaining why only movies were mentioned in the proposed bill. "We'll get television later," she said.

It is not TV drama or quiz shows or reruns of The Three Stooges alone that rouses this urge to suppress, as last year's *Face The Nation* interview with Khrushchev proved. How much opinion is thought permissible? Herbert Mitgang's comment is worth quoting at length:

"If a newspaper had published an interview with Khrushchev, no responsible person in any communications field would have thought of questioning the propriety of the publication. But when a television network, after great precautions to protect the integrity of the performance and after making its intention known to the highest level of the government, telecast an interview with the Kremlin leader, the propriety was very seriously questioned. The President of the United States made a statement that implied criticism. Important members of Congress openly challenged the wisdom of the presentation. The press was ambivalent. Under the circumstances it is reasonable to assume that the networks will bear the criticism in mind when they are considering future 'controversial' telecasts of this nature."

Television is on the whole a most pallid and apologetic amusement; its creators have spent enormous sums and thought in making it just that, trying to serve the audience instead of themselves, to "give the people what they want." Yet the people remain not only unsatisfied, but irate. "There is apparently a growing trend toward organized social control over media," writes a social scientist — Dr. Charles Winick — "and this may presage a reinterpretation of the historical American attitudes toward censorship." Or possibly, I am moved to add, of our attitudes toward television. There was a singular confusion in Dr. Frankel's discussion, in that everyone present believed in freedom of expression in *art*, and believed with equal positiveness that mass media should be censored, but none made any distinction. From this, one may conclude we have not so much lost faith in the First Amendment as we have not decided whether television is a news medium, an amusement or an art.

We are still in the state of mind of servicemen Bernard Shaw observed in the London theatre during World War I. It was their first time in a theatre and they did not know what it was. To paraphrase Shaw in our terms, we do not yet know how to play our part of the game. We can understand people on television singing and dancing and performing gymnastic tricks. We intensely enjoy artists who do imitations of cocks crowing and pigs squeaking. But when the leader of our enemies walks onstage following the variety it is a puzzling phenomenon. Is he to be taken in the same sense as the pig squeaker? Do we honor him with the stage, or are we examining him on his merits in a klieglit third degree? There is divided opinion. Shaw wrote, "I realized how very sophisticated the natural man has to become before the conventions of the theatre can be easily acceptable. It was hardly possible at first to find stuff crude enough to nurse them on." We are certainly still reaching for the crude; we have hardly a convention to rely on, and we have begun awkwardly, by putting television into the hands of men who are expected to at once make money from it and serve the public welfare at great cost. No one will even tell them the rules for either purpose, until they blunder into a Khrushchev interview. It

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is worth a note of sympathy for the powers of television. They are always being too silly for the taste of some Congressman or so serious as to offend important people from the President of the United States on down.

THE HARD FACT appears then that television has yet to prove by adherence to some standard of freedom of its own, that it deserves protection of the First Amendment, and we have yet to sort out our attitudes toward it. Liberals have to re-examine their idealistic anti-censorship stand in the light of their general conviction that other social matters are subject to legislative control. We need to think about Communists (and Catholics?) who see television as an instrument of public policy, and those who see it only as a child-taming instrument and say to hell with it, and the minority who think of it as a national resource of which everyone deserves a fair share and the assurance others are not using it against them. We ask the wrong question when we ask if anyone believes there should be censorship; it is like asking him if he believes in murder. We should ask instead whether television as a commercial enterprise deserves protection of an Amendment intended to ensure the enlightenment of society?

In an Occasional Paper for the Fund for the Republic, *Taste and the Censor in Television,* Dr. Winick discovers that television is indeed now censored in a number of informal ways—by network continuity departments which blue pencil matters of questionable taste, by sponsors who avoid controversy, by producers, networks and sponsors at the complaint of pressure groups. But both in detail and in his estimate of the deadening weight of this censorship, his scientific detachment has hoodwinked him into unwitting optimism. The situation is far worse than he describes.

In the matter of sponsor control, Dr. Winick notes "the advertiser is likely to be a businessman more interested in selling his product than in providing quality entertainment," leaving room for belief that network and packaged shows, purchased after they have been made (as opposed to shows ordered by a sponsor from a pilot script) are free of sponsor control, which is not so. With the exception of a few Sunday afternoon shows, and newscasts there is not a sponsored show on the air that is not subject to sponsor approval, word for word.

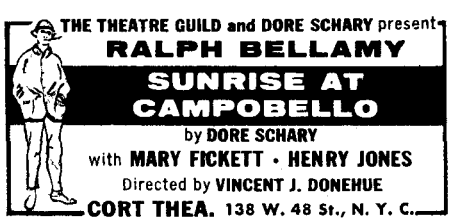
Multiple sponsorship, he says, has made it more difficult for sponsors to control shows, but it is quite the opposite. Instead of warping his show to the taste and policy of one sponsor, the maddened producer wrestles with two, three and more sponsors. Even *Playhouse 90* preserves its adventurousness at enormous cost and credit to CBS, which has had to cancel scripts at sponsors' insistence several times.

Dr. Winick fails, moreover, to appreciate the influence of government; here his evidence is faulty. He mentions Robert Dozier's *A Real Fine Cutting Edge* as an example of television's relative daring and freedom in matters of national defense and the military. The protagonist is an objectionable, rebellious and unmilitary draftee who believes the citizen is the better half of the citizen-soldier, who undertakes his training as a regrettable necessity. His sergeant is determined to "break" him, by the honored humiliations of military tradition. The story is unusual in that the draftee wins. But Dr. Winick does not know the obstacles this show met in getting on the air.

The script was submitted to CBS' *Studio One,* then sponsored by Westinghouse. All scripts that touch on government matters are submitted to authority. *A Real Fine Cutting Edge* was read by an Army Public Information Officer, who enjoyed it but refused to approve it, because it implied that the Army officially tolerated such sergeants. The changes required were more extensive than that: the sergeant would have to be court martialled to make it Grade A US No. 1. Dozier refused to make the changes, and Westinghouse refused to allow it on *Studio One* without Army approval. It was eventually performed, as Dr. Winick noted, on the old Kaiser anthology on NBC, and then only because the network continuity department (the title of the censor) was mistakenly under the impression it *had* been approved by the Army. There was a subsequent letter of protest from both the Army and the Air Force, complaining about Dozier's attitude. They were sent to the networks, not to Dozier. This glum little history hardly bears out Winick's idea that the military is handled freely and openly on television. It does suggest the extent to which television is in fact officially censored and colored to show authority in a consistently favorable light.

SUCCESS in television is tested by weighing the largest audience against the slightest critical response: fifteen or twenty complaints, say, from an audience of twenty or twenty five million people is considered as an approving vote of censorship as well as commercial policy. Winick tells us that sex expression seems to be "one of the areas of program content where there is comparatively close balance between audience and broadcaster performance": producer and viewers see eye to eye. But is this good? Or does it only reflect the fact that sex is not what it was in the twenties, when it was the center of attention of a generation still shaking off Victorian restraint. Pornography is bad taste, and in its name vulgarity and bawdiness have been banished from television to its loss. But there is a distinction, as Margaret Mead has pointed out: pornography stirs day dreams; it is unreal, what D. H. Lawrence called "sex in the head." What is censored in television's genteel way is everything that suggests life and vitality and energy. We need a good healthy bawdy laugh to blow the body odor and tooth moss ads off the screen. Instead, what is put on for pastime is expected to be fictional in the sense of false—that series of dreary pretenses about girls next door, peppy widows and virginal ingenues out of which Broadway musicals and standard TV plots are assembled. There is very little sex of any kind on television, because producers have formed their attitudes on the basis of very few complaints, and these do not come from the healthily amused but from the nasty-minded whose secret disease is fevered by the sight of ballet dancers in tights, inflamed by the very phrase "four letter words"—in short, the amusement of a hundred million people is censored by a handful of pornographers.

FRANK R. PIERSON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